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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3648 Friday, January 13, 2012

(January 12)

CORN ACRES AND CORN PRICES HIT A BLIP IN 2011

Usually corn prices and corn acreage are closely tied together, but this past year farmers ended up harvesting fewer acres than expected-- not because prices were down, but simply because of bad weather.

For Story Info: Corn Acres and Corn Prices Hit a Blip In 2011

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST ROUND OF USDA REPORTS

Here's a quick overview of the latest round of USDA reports. Gary Crawford has the details.

For Story Info: A Quick Overview of the Latest Round of USDA Reports

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS IN 2012?

What's 2012 going to bring for the nation's livestock producers?

For Story Info: What's Ahead For Livestock Producers in 2012?

(January 11)

STOCKS REPORT SHOWS LARGE STOCKS, BUT LESS USE FOR SOME CROPS

The latest USDA accounting of grain stocks has just a few little surprises in it.

For More Story Info: Stocks Report Shows Large Stocks, But Less Use for Some Crops

WHAT THE 2011 CROP SUMMARY NUMBERS SHOW

USDA issued its summary of 2011 crop numbers during its monthly crop production reports Thursday, including final production numbers. Rod Bain talks with USDA chief economist Joe Glauber.

For More Story Info: What The 2011 Crop Summary Numbers Show

EXPANSION IN EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HAWAIIAN RAINBOW PAPAYA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that on Dec. 1, the Government of Japan approved Rainbow papaya for commercial shipment to Japan. The Rainbow papaya is genetically engineered to be resistant to the papaya ringspot virus. This announcement marks the beginning of a new chapter for Hawaiian papaya growers.

"The market opening in Japan is great news for Hawaii's papaya producers and even better news for American agricultural exports," said Michael Scuse, Acting Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. "Under the Obama Administration, USDA has continued to expand markets for American goods abroad, worked aggressively to break down barriers to trade, and assisted U.S. businesses with the resources needed to reach consumers around the world. This announcement will ensure that Hawaii's papaya producers help to drive our agricultural economy by expanding exports, creating jobs, and strengthening our nation's competitiveness."

In the 1990s, an outbreak of the papaya ringspot virus decimated Hawaii's papaya crop. Scientists from Cornell University, the University of Hawaii, The Upjohn Company and USDA's Agricultural Research Service used biotechnology to develop the Rainbow papaya, which is resistant to the virus. After receiving full clearance from the U.S. government, the Rainbow papaya was commercialized in 1998. Now, the majority of Hawaii's papaya crop is resistant to ringspot virus through genetic engineering.

Japan was once the major market for Hawaiian papayas, with annual sales reaching \$15 million in 1996. These sales dropped to \$1 million by 2010 while U.S. exporters awaited Japan's approval of Rainbow papaya. With Japan's approval for import of Rainbow papaya, U.S. papaya producers are set to regain access to this important market, supporting jobs through increased exports.

Currently, the American brand of agriculture is surging in popularity worldwide. Farm exports in fiscal year 2011 reached a record high of \$137.4 billion—exceeding past highs by \$22.5 billion—and supported 1.15 million jobs here at home. The agricultural trade surplus stands at a record \$42.7 billion. Horticultural product exports are forecast to reach a record of \$28 billion, based on steady demand and high prices. Exports of fresh fruits and vegetables are expected to be strong to Japan, Canada and the European Union. Strong agricultural exports contribute to the positive U.S. trade balance, create jobs, boost economic growth and support President Obama's National Export Initiative goal of doubling all U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

For More Story Info: USDA Newsroom

(January 10)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK HIGHLIGHTS THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AT HAWAII PEARL HARBOR EVENT

The backdrop was the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument's Pearl Harbor for Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's highlighting of the Administration's commitment to renewable energy. In April 2009, the Pearl Harbor naval base was the first Hawaii military marine fleet to use biodiesel, replacing U.S. Navy-operated tour boats that shuttled visitors to and from the *USS Arizona Memorial* with five new boats capable of running on 100% biodiesel. The biodiesel is produced by Hawaii-based Pacific Biodiesel, Inc. which created one of the first biodiesel plants in the United States in 1996.

At the event, Vilsack highlighted the partnership between the U.S. Navy and USDA to promote biofuels. In January 2010, USDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus to encourage development of advanced biofuels and other renewable energy systems. The advancement of renewable energy is particularly important to Hawaii, which currently relies on imported fossil fuels for over 90% of its energy needs. Ongoing research and commitment to the development of renewable energy will help lessen this dependence and enable Hawaii to become a model for the production of drop-in fuels for automobiles, jets, tactical vehicles, and electrical generators. Through the utilization of Hawaii-grown algae, eucalyptus, sweet sorghum, banana grass, jatropha and energy cane, drop-in biofuels can serve as direct replacements or supplements to existing gasoline, diesel and jet fuels, without any changes to existing fuel distribution networks or engines.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

For More Story Info: <u>USDA Newsroom</u>

COTTON MAY NOT BE AS LUCRATIVE A CROP IN 2012

Cotton may not be as lucrative a crop for U.S. farmers in 2012 as it was last year. Gary Crawford spoke to USDA chief economist Joe Glauber

For Radio Story: Cotton May Not Be As Lucrative a Crop In 2012

NEEDED PRECIPITATION CONTINUES IN LONE STAR STATE

An unusual twist in the current La Nina weather pattern is bringing needed moisture to a state plagued by drought.

For Radio Story: Needed Precipitation Continues In Lone Star State

CALIFORNIA PRECIPITATION CONCERNS GROW

With each passing week a lack of rain and snow in the Golden State is making irrigators and ag operators nervous.

For Radio Story: California Precipitation Concerns Grow

(January 9)

BLUEPRINT FOR STRONGER SERVICE AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ANNOUNCES BLUEPRINT FOR STRONGER SERVICE TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY IN USDA OPERATIONS

The Blueprint for Stronger Service is designed to streamline, modernize, and cut costs to meet the evolving needs of a 21st century agricultural economy. "The USDA, like families and businesses across the country, cannot continue to operate like we did 50 years ago," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "We must innovate, modernize, and be better stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. We must build on the record accomplishments of farm communities in 2011 with a stronger, more effective USDA in 2012 and beyond."

The Blueprint for Stronger Service is based on a Department-wide review of operations conducted as part of the Administration's Campaign to Cut Waste, launched by President Obama and Vice President Biden to make government work better and more efficiently for the American people. The agency took a hard look at all USDA operations, from headquarters to field offices. The end result is a plan that will create optimal use of USDA's employees, better results for USDA customers, and greater efficiencies for American taxpayers.

The USDA will close 259 domestic offices, facilities and labs across the country, as well as seven foreign offices. In some cases, offices are no longer staffed or have a very small staff of one or two people; many are within 20 miles of other USDA offices. In other cases, technology improvements, advanced service centers, and broadband service have reduced some need for brick and mortar facilities. When fully implemented, these actions along with other recommended changes will provide efficiencies valued at about \$150 million annually-and eventually more based on future realignment of the workforce-and will ensure that USDA continues to provide optimal service to the American people within available funding levels. These actions and plans to close or consolidate facility, office and lab operations will impact USDA headquarters in Washington and in 46 states and 1 U.S. territory. For closure and consolidation details click here.

Detailed fact sheets on the Blueprint for Stronger Service can be found here, by USDA Mission Area: Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS); Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS); Food Safety; Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP); Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE); Research, Education and Economics (REE); and Rural Development. For more, please visit www.usda.gov/strongerservice.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

For More Story Info: USDA Newsroom

For Radio Story: Details of USDA Consolidation Plan
Consolidation Part of USDA Blueprint for Stronger Service
ACTUALITY: On Consolidation of Local USDA Offices
Latest USDA Efficiency Plans Not Farm Bill Related

Vilsack Does Not Expect Major Opposition to Office Reductions

ACTUALITY: Vilsack Outlines Office Consolidation Plans Services to Be Maintained As USDA Offices Consolidate

How USDA Budget Cuts Will Impact the Farm Service Agency

ACTUALITY: FSA County Committee Representation to Continue Vilsack Does Not Expect Major Opposition to Office Reductions

Vilsack Says Farmers Need Strong Safety Net Despite Budget Cuts

Vilsack's Suggestion to Congress on Handling Agency Budget Cuts

ACTUALITY: Providing Rural America Internet Access

Food Safety and USDA Consolidation Plans

ACTUALITY: On FSIS District Office Consolidation and Food Safety Cuts Not Likely To Pose Problems for USDA Data Gathering/Reports

SLOW ECONOMY HAS NOT SLOWED DOWN FOOD DEMAND

How has the slow economy affected our demand for food?

For Radio Story: Slow Economy Has Not Slowed Down Food Demand

GROWING STRAWBERRIES N A HYBRID MULCH SYSTEM

A veteran farmer describes how he uses a hybrid mulching system to grow strawberries. Organic farmer Lou Lego of Elderberry Pond Country Foods in the Finger Lakes area of New York State swears by a crop covering technique that's proven successful for him. Lego explains how he uses plastic in a hybrid mulching system and the benefits.

For Radio Story: Growing Strawberries in A Hybrid Mulch System

How Hybrid Mulching Works

ACTUALITY: The Benefit of Using Plastic In A Hybrid Mulch System

For more agriculture news visit **USDA.gov** and click Newsroom on the toolbar.



The Latest USDA Blog Posts

Secretary's Column

A Day of Service (CFBNP)

Here Comes the Year of the Dragon: How to Honor the Asian New Year while Protecting American Agriculture (FS)

Forest Service partners with Washington state mountain bike filmmakers (FS)

USDA Rural Development Continues to Support Those Who Go Green with New Energy Efficiency Initiative (RD)

People's Garden Helps to Strengthen a Community in Costa Rica (FAS)

Earth Team Volunteers Cleaning Mississippi Lake (NRCS)

In Oregon, beaver dams are being used to restore habitat (FS)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On January 17)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 03.12 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently rolled out the Blueprint for Stronger Service, which is the Department's response to addressing budget cuts under President Obama's national Campaign to Cut Waste. In this edition of Agriculture USA, USDA Radio provides team coverage on the USDA's plan to increase efficiency in its operations through consolidation, cutting costs and modernization.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 03.12 – USDA Consolidation Plans And Food Safety, Extreme Patterns For Final 2011 Weather Numbers, How To Have Fast Food Without Suffering The Consequences, Using A Major Retailer As A Basic Example, Keeping Toxic Substances Away From Pets.

AG UPDATE CD # 03.12 – Not Really A Surprising January Crop Report, Wheat Plantings And Stocks Higher Than Expected, Two Products Promoted Under One Checkoff, Using Conservation Easements In Land Planning, Wheat Straw May Supplement Low Hay Quantities.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – January 17 – Feed Grain and Wheat Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). January 18 – Sugar And Sweeteners Outlook (ERS – WAOB). January 19 – Livestock, Dairy, And Poultry Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). January 20 – Cattle On Feed Report (NASS).

These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The USDA Radio Newsline carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.

USDA Radio Newsline, 202-720-6776, 5:00pm ET

Or go to www.usda.gov, click on Newsroom at top of the page, scroll down on right side of page until you see Radio and TV. Then click on Daily Radio News Service or Weekly Radio Feature Service. For questions about USDA Radio's Features, fax name, station, and address to 202-690-2165.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

Secretary Tom Vilsack On USDA'S Blueprint for Stronger Service

Secretary Tom Vilsack talks about USDA's blueprint for stronger service.

It's designed -- in this era of tight budgets - to create optimal use of USDA's employees, better results for USDA customers, and greater efficiencies for American taxpayers.

YouTube: USDA on YouTube: Secretary Tom Vilsack on USDA's Blueprint for Stronger Service

OFF MIKE

SUKUP HOMES FOR HAITI – lowa companies and agricultural associations unite to build "Homes for Haiti". This story comes from **Ken Root** (High Plains/Midwest Ag Journal - Dodge City, Kansas http://www.hpj.com). They're called grain bin homes or a SafeTHome. This is the brainchild of Sukup Manufacturing. The 18 foot structure is earthquake and hurricane proof and can house and protect a family in badly damaged areas of Haiti. The Global Compassion Network and the lowa Food and Family Project (www.iowafoodandfamily.com) are coordinating a campaign to raise funding to build and send the homes to Haiti.

The SafeTHome was designed by Brett Nelson the Safety Director of Sukup Manufacturing. Brothers Charles and Steve Sukup, Iowa State University engineering graduates, run the company. Their father Gene Sukup started it in the 1960's.





Photos of the bin with a close shot showing officials of the Sukup Manufacturing Company Brett Nelson, designer of the home and Steve Sukup, Vice President of Sukup Manufacturing

Broadcasters if you have any humanitarian or community service events you'd like to share please forward to susan.carter@oc.usda.gov.

We love to hear about what you're doing and share it with others in the farm broadcaster family.

From all of us to all of you ... thank you for what you do



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